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Welcome to the Summer Newsletter for the Dacorum Family Support North & East team. We hope that the articles included in this issue will be of interest to you and your families. We have also included some suggestions to keep your children/teens busy over the summer period.

Our School Family Workers will be away during the school holidays and will return on **Thursday 3rd September 2026**. If you need urgent family support while we're closed, please see the helplines listed below.

We wish all our families a safe, happy and enjoyable summer break.



For support or to make a referral to our service, you can contact your school, self refer through our website, or call **01442 401222 Ext 5**. Please remember that we operate during term time only.

We can support you with: **Communicating with your child; Routines and boundaries; Managing challenging behaviour; Lone parenting; Family wellbeing; Worries, Anxiety and attendance; Building independence; Managing anger; SEND signposting; Financial guidance; and lots more!**



www.dacorumfamilyservices.org.uk

EMERGENCY HELPLINES

Family Lives - 0808 800 2222

Samaritans - 116 123

Childline - 0800 1111

HCC Children's Services 0300 123 4043

Families First Portal:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst

Dacorum Foodbanks

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/dacorum-foodbank/>

For urgent mental health concerns, NHS 111 (option 2) is a dedicated mental health crisis line staffed by trained professionals

Top Tips for Transition to Secondary School

Starting secondary school is a significant milestone in a child's life. It marks a passage into adolescence and brings about several significant changes. They will go from being the oldest in school to being the youngest, having to find their way around a large new school with different teachers for different subjects. They will also have to take on more responsibility, such as:

- taking a new and unfamiliar route
- planning for each day's timetable
- making sure they have the right books and equipment
- doing homework most evenings, which has to fit into their routine alongside other interests

Top Tips

- *Communication is very different to primary school!*
- *Check all the apps you need for homework, communications etc – there is often more than one*
- *Know key contacts eg form tutor, pastoral team*
- *Encourage your child to complete homework as soon as they can after it's been set*
- *Check uniform policy*
- *Pack bags the night before – different books needed for each day*
- *You could begin giving your child some responsibility in this last term of year 6 e.g packing their own bag with snack and water bottle*
- *Have a calendar on display at home clearly marked with different equipment needed for different days eg sports kit, projects, music etc*
- *Practise the route to school (especially if travelling independently)*



Article produced in conjunction with material available on Family Lives website
www.familylives.org.uk/

Support for Families

'POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOUR' WHEN YOU BAN SCREENS AS A CONSEQUENCE

WHEN THE CONSEQUENCE DOESN'T MATCH THE BEHAVIOUR

Banning screens is one of the most commonly used consequences — but often it has no logical link to what actually happened. When the outcome isn't connected, the child's brain struggles to learn anything meaningful. Instead of understanding why the behaviour was a problem, they only learn: "I've lost my screen time." This weakens cause-and-effect learning and reduces the chance of long-term behaviour change.

WHY SCREEN BANS OFTEN CREATE RESENTMENT

When a consequence feels unfair or unrelated, the child's emotional response shifts from reflection to resentment. Their energy goes into feeling wronged, not into understanding or repairing. This resentment can damage connection, increase pushback, and make the original behaviour more likely to happen again. The young person becomes focused on the consequence itself, not the behaviour that led to it.

THE BRAIN'S RESPONSE TO UNRELATED CONSEQUENCES

For a consequence to be effective, the brain needs coherence — the "this happened because of that" link. When the consequence has nothing to do with the action, the brain can't form that link. Instead, the child may feel punished, confused, or powerless, activating their stress response. This shuts down the parts of the brain responsible for learning, empathy, and self-regulation.

WHY SCREEN REMOVAL STOPS BEING A LEARNING TOOL

If screen removal is used for almost everything — arguing, rough play, forgetting things, mess, sibling conflict — the consequence loses meaning. The child doesn't connect it to the behaviour; they simply experience screen time as something adults can take away at any moment. This can increase anxiety, reduce trust, and create a sense of walking on eggshells, which inhibits genuine growth.

WHAT ACTUALLY TEACHES BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Behaviour change happens when consequences are linked to the behaviour itself. If the issue was rough play, the learning should be about safety. If the issue was hurtful words, the learning should be about repair. If the issue was difficulty following instructions, the learning should be about pacing, support, or collaboration. Logical and natural consequences support the child's developing brain far more effectively than blanket screen bans.

WHEN SCREENS CAN BE PART OF A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

There are rare times when screen-related behaviour connects to screen-related consequences — for example, if the young person misused the device, accessed unsafe content, or hurt someone during gaming. In these cases, a temporary pause to reset, repair, and practise safer habits makes sense. Even then, the tone should be calm, clear, and focused on skill-building, not punishment.

FOR A COPY OF OUR INFORMATION SHEET, HEALTHY SCREEN HABITS, LIKE THE POST AND COMMENT SCREEN BELOW.
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When you ban screens as a consequence, it can feel like the quickest way to make the lesson stick. But for many young people (especially Neurodivergent children), screens are a regulating tool, so removing them often ramps up overwhelm rather than reducing the behaviour.



This poster will help to explain why consequences that don't match the behaviour rarely lead to meaningful change. Article and poster taken from:

[The Contented Child | Nurturing the whole child](#)

COMMUNITY FOODBANK

Open to to anyone in genuine need
No vouchers or referral required
Free tea/coffee and a friendly welcome for all
All details correct as of June 2024

Kings Langley
Tue 10-11.30am
(Open every day for donations)
All Saints Church,
WD4 8JS
(Front of the church on the right)

Apsley
Tue 12.30-2.30pm/
Thu 10am-12 noon
St Mary's Church,
HP3 9ST
(Meeting room at rear)

Bennetts End
Wed 9.30-11.30am
St Benedict's Church,
HP3 8JU
(in the church hall)

Donations welcome* at these locations and at:
• The bar at Kings Langley Football Club
• Collection point in the Dunelm store, Apsley

Scan to see our current food needs

Scan for cash donation online

*Non-perishable foods and essential cleaning products/toiletries please. Please only donate in-date items.

@KingsLangleyFoodbank

Neurodiversity Support Hub

For Parents, Carers and Professionals

We can offer support, signposting and guidance about a whole range of things including but not limited to:

- Understanding ADHD/Autism
- Distressed Behaviours
- Anxiety
- School

The phones are answered by our team of parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people



Are you a Parent, Carer or Professional?

01727 833963

supporthub@add-vance.org

Open Monday-Friday
9 AM - 1PM



Here to support, reach out for a listening ear

We Can't:
• Give updates/fast track places on waiting lists
• Recommend specific private assessors

SEND Support

DSPL8 Delivering Special Provision Locally

Support and Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities

Facebook - www.facebook.com/dspldacorum
Website - www.dacorumdspl.org.uk



ADD-vance Helpdesk is open from 9am to 1pm every weekday via [01727 833963](tel:01727833963) or email: herts@add-vance.org
Website: www.add-vance.org
Facebook: www.add-vance.org/parents/

Hertfordshire Local Offer: The Local offer lets parents and young people know what special education needs and disabilities services are available in Hertfordshire and who can access them
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/Local-Offer/The-Hertfordshire-Local-Offer.aspx>

Holiday Activities

Book HAPpy Camps



Search and book a HAPpy Activity Camp

HAPpy Camps are available for children and young people from reception to year 11, who are in receipt of benefits related free school meals.

The next HAPpy programme will take place in Summer 2026.

Should you have any questions about HAPpy please contact haf@herts.ac.uk or call 01707 284229.

sportinherts.org.uk/happy-activity-camps

Holiday Activities

Adventure Playgrounds

There are four adventure playgrounds in the area - lots of fun activities including slides, climbing walls, water play, table tennis, crafts. The playgrounds operate as an open access facility which means children can come and go as they please (must register before attending). Children under 8 are welcome when accompanied by an adult.

<http://orlo.uk/jqCnT>



What are High Five Holiday Camps?

The camps provide high-quality sport, entertaining enrichment activities, as well as a nutritious hot meal.

Funded by the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, the camps are run every school holiday period. From 10 am until 3 pm,

Locations

Dacorum – Lime Walk Primary School

Who is eligible to attend?

Children eligible to attend High Five camps are:

- Aged between 5-11 years
- Eligible for free school meals
- Referred via a professional service

<https://apex360.co.uk/highfive/>



Summer Reading Challenge



Summer Reading Challenge

Summer Reading Challenge 2026
Illustrations © Harry Woodgate 2026, Read to the Beat © The Reading Agency 2026

ENJOY THIS SUMMER IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Here is a list of places that you can enjoy the water in Hertfordshire

LIDOS

- Hitchin Lido
- Letchworth Lido
- Ware Priory Lido

SPLASH PARKS

- Fairlands Valley Splash Park, Stevenage
- Splashlands, WGC
- Cassiobury Park, Watford
- Howard Park Splash Park and Paddling Pool, Letchworth
- Bancroft Splash Park, Hitchin
- Royston Splash Park
- Gadebridge Park - Hemel

WATER SPORTS

- Stanborough Park, WGC
- Fairlands Valley, Stevenage
- Lee Valley White Water Centre, Cheshunt
- Aqua Parcs, Stevenage
- ESSA Water Activities Centre, Broxbourne

BE WATER AWARE

Learn how to be Water Aware and know how to be safe around water by checking out our safety tips.

MoneySavingCentral

Kids Eat Free - during the holidays, uniform sale dates, activities & lots more. Website link here:

<https://moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free>



Support & Advice for Teens

The teenage years can feel confusing for both young people and the adults who love them. If your teen seems bigger in emotions, later to sleep, or drawn to risk and independence, you're not doing anything wrong, you're seeing a brain in development.

This stage is not about pushing you away, it's about growing up. Your steady presence, calm boundaries and understanding of what's happening beneath the behaviour matter more than ever. Development is not defiance - its growth in progress.

Article and poster taken from:

[The Contented Child | Nurturing the whole child](#)

THE TEENAGE BRAIN UNDER CONSTRUCTION UNDERSTANDING TEENAGERS

THE TEENAGE BRAIN IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The teenage brain is not finished — it is being remodelled. The emotional centre (limbic system) develops earlier than the thinking and planning centre (prefrontal cortex). This means feelings can be big, fast, and intense, while judgement and impulse control are still catching up. When adults see mood swings or reactivity, it is often brain development in action, not "attitude".

SLEEP IS A BIOLOGICAL NEED, NOT LAZINESS

Teenagers genuinely need more sleep, around 8-10 hours, and their body clock shifts later during puberty. Melatonin releases later at night, making it hard to fall asleep early and hard to wake up early. A tired teen can look irritable, unmotivated, or emotional. Often the most supportive response is helping protect rest, not pushing productivity.

RISK TAKING HAS A DEVELOPMENTAL PURPOSE

The teenage brain is wired to seek novelty, excitement, and reward. Dopamine sensitivity increases, making new experiences feel powerful and motivating. This can show up as risk taking, thrill seeking, or big social decisions. While it can feel worrying for adults, this drive helps teens explore identity and independence. They need guidance and safe boundaries, not shame.

PUBERTY REWIRES MORE THAN BODIES

Puberty brings hormonal shifts that affect mood, sensitivity, and social awareness. Teens often become more self-conscious and peer-focused because their brain is tuning into belonging and status. Friendship changes, strong emotions, and caring deeply about what others think are all developmentally typical, even when they seem dramatic from the outside.

CONNECTION BUILDS THE THINKING BRAIN

Teenagers still need adults, even if they push away. Calm connection, listening, and respectful boundaries help strengthen the prefrontal cortex over time. When teens feel safe and understood, their regulation and decision-making improve. They are not trying to be difficult — they are learning how to be human with a brain still under construction.



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With Youth instant messaging (5-19 year olds, parents and carers)



Helpline and instant messaging service to chat online or over the phone to get support with any mental health concern. 0208 189 8400 (option 2) Mon-Fri 5-10pm www.withyouth.org

Monday to Friday 11am-5pm. Young people can access free and confidential information,

Services for Young People
Hertfordshire County Council

advice and support on jobs and careers, training, education, relationships, personal safety, housing, self esteem, benefits and finances and much more. Drop in or make an appointment. XC Centre, Jarman Park.

Tel: 01442 454060 or Text: 07507 240475 [Services for Young People](#)

The Sandbox

Free online mental health support for young people aged 10-25 Years old.



Free Resources



Self-Guided Mental Health Modules



Live Chat



Up To 12 Therapy Sessions

Get Support At thesandbox.mindler.co.uk

Dacorum Family Services North & East

Office Tel: **(term time only)** 01442 401222 (Ext 5) www.dacorumfamilyservices.org.uk



HertsHub

Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) system

www.hertshub.co.uk

